

Andrew Jackson, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

JACKSON'S VISIT TO MOUNT VERNON.¹

¹ Handwriting of Maj. John Reid but indorsed in Jackson's handwriting, "A Jackson Visit to Mount Vernon". Jackson and Reid were in Washington from Nov. 17 until Dec. 24, 1815. He probably visited Mount Vernon soon after his arrival at the capital. The paper is filed in Jackson MSS., vol. 118, p. 117.

The occasion of Jackson's visit to Washington was the report, communicated by the Secretary of War, that some members of Congress spoke of impeaching him for his treatment of Judge Hall. The information made a strong impression on his mind and accompanied by Mrs. Jackson and Major Reid he set out at once for the capital to confront his accusers. Arrived there he found the administration on his side; and public opinion was so much in his favor that his critics did not dare to go on with their charges. See Jackson to Isaac L. Baker, Sept. 12, 1815.

Washington, November, 1815.

It is now night, and I am just returned from a visit to Mount Vernon, a spot rendered sacred by the residence of its former owner. Judge Washington was, unfortunately, not at home; but from Mr. Custis and the rest of the family, we received the utmost hospitality and kindness.

The scite is really a delightful one. By a gentle ascent you reach the summit of an eminence which commands, on the one side, an extensive country prospect, and overlooks, on the other, the majestic Potwamac on the smooth bosom of which vessels of various descriptions are seen perpetually gliding. On *that*, stands the venerable dwelling

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of the patriarch of our Liberties, corresponding in its style, with the plain and simple taste of him who planned it. A neat little flower garden, laid out and trimmed with the utmost exactness, ornamented with green and hot houses in which flourish the most beautiful of the Tropical plants affords a happy relief to the solemn impressions produced by a view of the antique structure it adjoins, and leads you insensibly into the most delightful reverie, in which you review in imagination the manner in which the greatest and the best of men after the most busy and eventful life, retired into privacy and amused the evening of his days. Indeed, every thing you behold derives a thousandfold interest from its association with the memory of its venerable projector. All the splendor of the most elegant architecture and the most fanciful decorations can produce no such impressions.

From the Garden I went to visit a spot in which no enlivening scarcely a consoling emotion could find a place in my bosom. In a small vault at the foot of the hill, overgrown with Cedar, repose the bones of the father of his country. Why is this so! must the charge of ingratitude forever rest upon Republicks? It is now several sessions since Congress solicited the remains of him whose whole life was devoted to his country's service, in order that some suitable testimonial of a nation's respect might be shewn them. The venerable widow who cherished them as the most precious relict, sacrificed her individual feelings to a nation's wishes, and granted the request. Since then, as though the apparently warm interest they displayed had been a studied mockery, those remains have been permitted to moulder in the "dark, narrow cell" where they were at first deposited. I perceive that the whole family are mortified and hurt at it; not that they wish any splendid national mausoleum to preserve the remains of one who is entombed in their hearts; but that having surrendered their right to them, they have no longer any power